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Toy Safety Tips



Toy makers must make sure that they produce safe toys that meet the safety standards set by Health Canada. Sometimes unsafe toys do make their way onto store shelves and into homes. You may also have older toys that are no longer safe, or the way the toys are being used may expose children to hazards.

Here are some tips to help you choose safe toys and to help you keep children safe when they play with toys.

When Buying Toys

- Read and follow the age label, warnings, safety messages and assembly instructions for the toy
- Look for sturdy, well-made toys
- Remember that toys for older children may not be safe for younger children

Note: Check home-made toys for all of the same hazards listed on this sheet

Choking Hazards:

- Children under three years of age tend to put things in their mouths – small toys, small balls or small loose toy parts are choking hazards for these children
- Know how the child plays – small toys can be dangerous even for children three and over who still tend to put things in their mouths
- Check squeeze toys for loose or removable squeakers
- Check toy cars and trucks for loose or removable wheels, tires or other small parts
- Check the eyes, nose and other small items on stuffed and plush toys to make sure they cannot be pulled off
- Check that infant toys like rattles and teethingers are large enough that they won't get stuck in an infant's throat

Other Hazards:

- Avoid toys with cords that are long enough to wrap around a child's neck, especially stretchy cords – the cords could strangle a child
- Avoid loud toys – loud noise can damage a child's sensitive hearing – a toy that is loud for an adult is likely too loud for a child
- Check that the toy does not have sharp points or edges – these could cut a child

After Buying Toys

- Always supervise children and teach them how to use toys safely
- Promptly remove and discard all toy packaging such as plastic bags and plastic wrap, foam, staples and ties – these can suffocate or choke a child
- Keep all toys, especially plush and soft toys, away from heat sources like stoves, fireplaces and heaters – they could catch fire and burn a child
- Check toys often for hazards like loose parts, broken pieces or sharp edges, and repair or discard any weak or broken toys

Toy Storage

- Store toys and games for older children separate from those for younger children
- Use a toy box without a lid, or one with a lightweight lid that will not fall on a child



- Not all storage boxes are good for toys, if the box has a lid remove it or check to make sure:
 - the box has air holes for breathing, in case a child climbs inside
 - the lid has a hinge that will hold it open in any position and it will stay open even if a child pushes down on it
 - there is no latch that could lock the lid and trap a child inside
- Remember that children should not have access to airtight storage bins – these could lead to suffocation if a child climbs inside

Ride-on Toys

- Choose a ride-on toy that suits the child's age, size and abilities
- Check that the ride-on toy will not tip when the child is using it – check that it is stable when weight is placed on any riding point
- Use the ride-on toy far away from stairs, traffic, swimming pools and other dangerous areas
- Be aware that a child on a wheeled ride-on toy can move very quickly – look for hazards like furniture, lamps, cords, decorations or appliances that could be knocked or pulled down onto a child, and remove the hazards before play begins
- Baby walkers are hazardous – do not use them

Toys with Batteries

- Only adults should install batteries
- Install batteries properly – improper installation, or mixing different battery types, can cause batteries to leak or overheat and this could injure a child
- Check that young children cannot open a toy's battery compartment
- Make sure that a child does not take a battery-operated toy to bed – burns and other injuries could result from batteries leaking or overheating
- Call a doctor or a poison control centre immediately if a child swallows a battery – batteries can be poisonous

Latex Balloons

- Latex balloons have caused a number of deaths – the balloon can be inhaled and can block a child's airway
- Always keep uninflated latex balloons or broken balloon pieces out of reach of children
- Latex balloons are best used for decoration, not for play

Jewellery

- Never allow a child to suck or chew on metal jewellery – it may contain lead, and ingesting even small amounts of lead can be harmful to a child's health and development
- Never place a necklace, string, ribbon or chain around the neck of a child under three years of age – the jewellery could strangle a child and small attachments could be a choking hazard

More on Making Play Safe

- Keep small household items like broken crayons, coins, paper clips, pen caps, jewellery, hair clips, screws, buttons, keys, candy, gum, etc. out of the reach of children under three years of age – these items are common causes of choking
- Decorations and collectibles can have loose small parts that could choke, or sharp parts that could cut – keep them out of children's reach
- Check party favours like whistles and blowers for loose parts like small reeds – these could be inhaled

Health Canada investigates safety related consumer complaints.

If you would like more information, or if you think you have a toy that could be dangerous, contact your nearest Health Canada Product Safety Office:

Vancouver	British Columbia	(604) 666-5003	Bby_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Calgary	Alberta	(403) 292-4677	Cal_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Edmonton	Alberta	(780) 495-2626	Edm_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	(306) 975-4502	Sk_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Winnipeg	Manitoba	(204) 983-5490	Mb_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Hamilton	Ontario	(905) 572-2845	Tor_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Toronto	Ontario	(416) 973-4705	Tor_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Montreal	Quebec	(514) 283-5488	Quebec_Prod@hc-sc.gc.ca
Longueuil	Quebec	(450) 646-1353	Quebec_Prod@hc-sc.gc.ca
Quebec	Quebec	(418) 648-4327	Quebec_Prod@hc-sc.gc.ca
Moncton	New Brunswick	(506) 851-6638	Atlantic_ProdSafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Halifax	Nova Scotia	(902) 426-8300	Atlantic_ProdSafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
St. John's	Newfoundland	(709) 772-4050	Atlantic_ProdSafe@hc-sc.gc.ca

